

## S10 E06 - Daughter Pt 3

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**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Hi and welcome to season 10 of the Abiding Together Podcast. We are so excited to have you with us this season. Abiding Together is a place where you can find connection, rest and encouragement on your journey with Jesus Christ. My name is Sr Miriam James Heidland, and every week I am joined by two of my dearest friends, Heather Khym and Michelle Benzinger. We talk about our life with Christ. We talk about big things, small things, beautiful things, sorrowful things. We laugh, we cry you'll fit right in. You are most welcome here. So please grab a cup of coffee, settle in and welcome home.

Hi, and welcome to this week's episode of the Abiding Together Podcast. We are continuing our four-part series. This is part three of our four-part series on the identity as daughter. And, um, as you can tell, we are together, together again, it's been nice to see a beautiful.

**Heather Khym:** It's so fun. Yeah. This is so much better than zoom.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I know it is.

**Heather Khym:** I mean, we try to act like it's fine. It's okay.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** It's not, it's not our true needs. This is our true need here.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Thank you for voicing them, both of you. I accept and I just honor you.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah. Well, you know, I'm learning, I'm learning. And there's no like, 'cause Spirit Juice is amazing so there's no like, "Oh my gosh,

somebody's mic is not on." Or the dog is barking next door, or a kid comes in, he's like, "Mom, I need help." So we're not really it's just an interrupted time.

**Heather Khym:** We're not worried about our Wi-Fi connection.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Like our wee-fee is totally functioning and we're not really sure what to do.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Our wee-fee?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Our wee-fee is totally functioning.

**Michelle Benzinger:** That's how they say it in Texas, I don't know.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** In the great nation. So this episode we're gonna talk about, is it's gonna be very tender and we're actually gonna talk about, we've talked about identity as daughter as delighted in by the Trinity, we've talked about our core needs as daughters as being seen, known, and loved, and today we're gonna have a very, just vulnerable and honest and tender discussion on the wounds of being a daughter, which all of us bear. So we've chosen one scripture passage to guide our four-part series. And for this particular series, it's Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians. So we're just gonna continue to offer that to your heart as you continue to pray with it because it's so lovely and there's so many treasures in this treasure chest of so many jewels of beauty. So once again, we'll start off by reading Saint Paul's letter to the Ephesians 3:14-21. And he says this, "For this reason, I kneel before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches, he may strengthen you with power through his spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever. Amen."

**Michelle Benzinger:** Amen.

**Heather Khym:** Amen.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** So, my dear friends, we've talked about receiving, we've talked about trust, we've talked about security, we've talked about needs,

and today as we mentioned we're gonna talk about the deeper places. And so, we speak about the reality of life and the places where love has been interrupted, where trauma has happened, where the connection has been disrupted. And these are places that we all have, and every choice has a consequence whether it's ours or somebody else's, and it does leave areas of sorrow within us. And it's in these places that Christ wants to come in. But I think this is going to be a very powerful and just very honest discussion about some of the wounds that we bear of daughterhood. So Michelle, what is your heart as we kind of dive into this?

**Michelle Benzinger:** I think there's two parts. I think there's the emotional wounds that we each experience and they're gonna be individual to the person and to their story, and I think it's very evident that we have to realize that we are at war and that there is something, especially about the wounds of women, not to compare them to the wounds of men, it's not that, but there's something really special about the wounds of women. Even coming with a scripture, "I will put enmity between you and the woman."

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** In Genesis.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes. In Genesis. "And between her offspring." There is something like, there's a full out attack and assault, I would say on women. And it usually has to do with her heart. Because women are life givers and women are the heart of the body, they're the heart of the family, they're the heart of their communities, we are heart. And I think one of the most dangerous things is when a woman can close her heart off. So as soon as that's, I think we are taught subconsciously or maybe consciously in some areas when we are younger or growing up or whatever, that our hearts are liabilities and that, especially our sensitive hearts are liabilities, and that your heart isn't a liability, but it's actually a life source. But I think there's something like, I will shut it down. There's part of me that will shut it down. And I think wherever the wound is in a certain person, it has to go, it totally correlates with the glory that the Lord wants to show through them. Like "This is where I'm gonna take her out, it is gonna be this lie, it's gonna be this thing." And it is so tailor-perfect to-

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** The enemy's a sniper like we've talked about. He's a sniper.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes. The enemy's a sniper. And I love it because even Edith Stein always talks about each woman has a feminine expression that's just her own also, a unique expression just her own. So there will be this lie but it'll also be tailor-made, or this attack tailor-made for that person because this person has a unique expression of God's glory, just their own that He wants her to display. So it's really, once again, becoming a student of yourself and saying, "All right, where have I

been taken out?" And, "Where have I..." Really identifying it. It's almost like getting a spiritual MRI, going under a little thing and saying, where are the areas that I have cancer in myself? Where are the areas that have wounds in myself? where are the areas that have happened that need to be healed? And to really look at that. So this is good. I think we wanna use the disclaimer, we don't want it to be so wound-focused that we're not God's glory-focused either. We wanna focus more on God's redemption, and restoration, and rescue. And I think a really good thing is, it is not the story of our struggle as the story of His rescue. That is the bigger story. So Heather, what are your thoughts?

**Heather Khym:** Yeah, it's the journey of becoming who we truly are, who were made to be. We all love that quote. It's like, "Be who you are and you'll set the world on fire." Well, are we really living through the fullness of who we are? And I think that that's the pursuit. That's why we go into the wounds, that's why we go in there. It's not to go, "Oh my gosh, hear about all the horrible things that happened to me." And, "I'm a victim and I'm just gonna stay there in that place." Although there is a time to acknowledge that-

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Being victimized.

**Heather Khym:** Some hard things happened to me And these parts are really, what really hurt. And to just sit there, but to invite Jesus into those places. So I always say don't go there alone, don't go back into the past alone, you need to hold the hands of Jesus and Mary to go back in there because Jesus is the one who's gonna heal it. But yeah, it is the journey of becoming fully who we are into our glory. And I too believe what you said, the enemy will attack us. And where we allow God's redemption and healing to occur, I think is where our best ministry, our greatest loves-

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Definitely.

**Heather Khym:** Our passion, our impact in the world and making the world a better place, I think it's gonna come from those places that have been redeemed. And Jesus shows us this. When He returns to Thomas and says, "Put your finger here in my side, Thomas." He still has the scars there-

**Michelle Benzinger:** He still has the wounds, yeah.

**Heather Khym:** And it's to show His glory. It's to show His glory. And I'm like, "Oh, are the wounds in my own life places of glory, or are they bandaged up, still hiding, are they festering?" Whatever it might be. And to just, some of those visuals are important for me, they've been really important for me to acknowledge there's

some places here. And sometimes we need help, we need someone to come alongside us. I'm not great at doing this stuff alone because I like to just go, "I'm good. I'm good, I'm good." "I can take care of it." Or, "I'm taking care of it," or "Why would I go back in there?" But to have someone come alongside me and teach me where there might be things there, where to press in, that's been really, really helpful for me. How about for you Sister?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** So true. Yeah, really what we're talking about is we're talking about the actual life of Christ.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes. Amen.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Who had wounds and He had, He resurrected. I love Isaiah. He was a man of sorrows acquainted with weakness. Like, by His stripes we are healed. That is so powerful. "By His stripes we are healed." And so it means we can, we often talk about that, holding things in both hands. It's not one or the other. And we go to one extreme or the other usually 'cause in our own broken humanity, that's what we do. But Christ is teaching us the way of the Paschal Mystery of how do we tend to the places of our hearts that have been broken, where love has been interrupted, where there have been mental wounds, emotional, spiritual, physical, sexual wounds that we all have and that we can pretend we don't have them, or we can try to become self-reliant but none of that really works. And it's Christ in His poverty, in His surrendering to the Father's will and taking in those places, and taking on everything we've ever suffered. You were saying something Heather, in one of our previous episodes of that reality of Christ with us. That's true. I mean, that is true. And there's nothing, I remember my spirit director told me one time, he's like, "Sister Miriam, Christ has taken on more of your suffering than you can ever imagine." He said, "When you get to heaven, you will see how much He's actually taken on, on your behalf." And that wrecked me, just absolutely wrecked me. And so, what we're talking about today, even though it might be a bit uncomfortable in certain ways for many people and just in our own hearts as well, that we're on a path with Christ who's taken us by the hand through the crucifixion into the resurrection. And like we've said before, the only way is through, there is no other way. Yeah. I appreciate the quotes, Michelle, that you were offering to us by Henri Nouwen and this is from his book, "The Inner Voice of Love."

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes. Stunning book.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Just stunning beautiful. So stunningly beautiful. So as we kind of open this conversation up, I just want to read you for the first, and I hope we can get to all three quotes, but we'll have them in the show notes, will we not?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** They're just so lovely. And I prayed with, especially this first one, I prayed with it so deeply. And so this is Henri Nouwen just offering his heart to us and I just offer it to you as well, and I think you'll find yourself in here somewhere. He says this, he says, "You keep listening to those who seem to reject you, but they never speak about you. They speak about their own limitations. They confess their poverty in the face of your needs and desires, and they simply ask for your compassion. They do not say that you are a bad, or ugly, or despicable, they only say that you're asking for something they cannot give and that they need to get some distance from you to survive emotionally. The sadness is that you perceive their necessary withdrawal as a rejection of you instead of as a call to return home and to discover your true belovedness there."

**Michelle Benzinger:** Dang mic drop.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** I know, I know.

**Heather Khym:** What came up in your prayer? That's what I'm curious about. You said this one in particular.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** This one in particular, just because my deepest core wounds are rejection, abandonment, and shame. And everything that hurts me deeply has a variation of that theme. So when things hurt me deeply I'm like, "Okay" I know myself well so I'm just like, "Okay, where's this hitting a place that's not yet in communion with Christ?" And so, yeah, there's just a couple of situations in my life where I had interactions with people and it was so hard not to take it personally, I was trying not to, but for me it was just saying, they weren't saying this, but what I felt by their behavior they were saying, "You're not worth it, and you're despicable and I don't wanna talk to you." And it was so like, for me, that's what my wounds were saying. Even though I know these two people very well, and they're very wonderful people, but they just have their own particular stories.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Stories.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** And so, I had to sit with this for a long time and not to either make agreements and vows out of my hurt, but to see them with compassion and to understand that they're just simply not capable of offering to me what I'm desiring there. And I have to give them the freedom to be that, and that I don't have to take that personally. This is not about, like, yes I had to take responsibility for any behavior that is off. But that fact that this is not about me and that Christ in these moments where the pain is so deep of abandonment or

rejection, the sting in my heart is so deep, that the only place I can go is with Jesus and say, "Jesus, can you come speak to me here?" And I went back to that over and over and over 'cause these are very deep places in my heart. And it's just so profoundly, just a gentle balm upon my heart of like, "Okay." It's just like a massaging of when our muscles are tense, it just takes awhile. And this has been my whole life. Like this is, especially lately, it was just like, "Whoo! my goodness." Yeah. What about for y'all?

**Heather Khym:** Well, I was just gonna say what I love about just what you're saying there, but also just that I know about you, is that you do consistently go there, again, and again, and again. And that's so defiles the culture that we live in, and the quick fix, and the microwave thing, and the drive-through- And all of that stuff that we experience on a daily level with superficial things. But we do live that way with sort of an expectation that, it's like, "God, you're sort of the genie in the lamp, and I'm gonna make my wish, or I'm gonna drive through and make my order and then I want you to come through for me. And then if you don't, in the timeframe or in the way that I want, then that means you're not gonna come through for me, period, that now it's up to me." And just your surrender to the process and the journey of continually going back and viewing it more as like, you always say, "Layers don't keep the onion." Like layers, just every layer, bringing again to the Lord to say, "I'm not done yet with this. I need more of you here." And I find it's impossible for us to experience the weight of these moments and bring it all to God at once. In His gentleness, I think it's He wants it to be a process so that we have time and pace. And in that time and pace that we're bonding with Him intimately, that we're coming into a deeper communion with Him. He's not so much about just healing, He's about intimacy. It's not just, "Can you solve the problems?" "Can you figure this out for me?" Yeah. It's like that does happen in the restoration process, but the process can just look like a child coming to their parents saying, "Can I please have more, can you help me here, more?" And that's, it's so inspiring that part of you, that you keep going back there to Him, to the one who can, to the one who can. And in your life you've learned to not go to the other things. You did that for so long and it didn't work so the acknowledgement now of, "No, I know where I need to go with this and I'm just gonna keep going back again," that's really beautiful. Really, really beautiful.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Aw, thank you friend. That blesses me a lot. Thank you.

**Michelle Benzinger:** You're so beautiful. And I think it's important, it's funny, we're big Henri Nouwen fans, obviously, because we love his books and I think there's such a beautiful vulnerability about him right now.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** He's so unnervingly vulnerable. You're like, "Ugh, stop!"

**Heather Khym:** This is too much. I'm starting to close my eyes.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And I really picked up this book "Inner Voice Of Love" and I've had it for, probably 10 years. And then I picked it up just by chance off my bookshelf and I started reading and I'm like, this was not here 10 years ago. These quotes were not here. But it's like one of those ones where you're like, okay. It's not even like reading "Theology Of The Body" again, I'm going through a deep dive of "Theology Of The Body." I'm like, this wasn't here when I read it, when I was this idealistic 22 year old before I had kids, but there's something about it, when he says that line, "The sadness is that you perceive..."

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yes!

**Michelle Benzinger:** "Their necessary withdrawal." And what I perceive from different people, and what assumptions I have made, and what agreements I have made, I think is the biggest thing. Because I perceive that the person's rejection of me, or I perceive, I'm already five steps ahead of a person. If I think, one of my core wounds is abandonment. Chris and I would, we laugh now, but really when we were first married, he could tell me if he loves me, that would be great. If he told me he wouldn't leave me, that meant more to me. I was like, "That's great, you can love me, don't leave me." And I mean, I still cry to this day, I remember during marriage prep with Father Mike and I kept on asking, "But what if he leaves?" He's like, "I know this man, he's good." And he goes, "What if he does Michelle? God is still there. Even if, God is still good and He is still there with you. He's Emmanuel and He will be with you." But realizing there's this abandonment thing, but I'm already playing out the scenario. If something happens, then I'm already five steps ahead. This is what it's gonna look like, I'm already in the future.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** It's that catastrophic thinking. Yep.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes. I am anticipating the dread, or the other shoe dropping because that's how my childhood was. Where's the other shoe going to drop because more than often, it did drop, so I was always anticipating. And now realizing, taking a step back and saying, "Oh, history is being redeemed and restored. It is not going to repeat."

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Amen, girl.



**Michelle Benzinger:** "It is gonna be redeemed and restored." And there was something powerful. I likened it, one of the first episodes for this season, is there was something when I went to John Paul II's shrine, that, it was just so powerful. But there was something like, I was looking at all of his different cyclical that he's written, they had a list of it. And it was the first one was "Man, the Redeemer Mission of the Redeemer, Redeemer."

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** "Mother of the Redeemer"

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yes. It's all Redeemer. And it was like, that is who you are, is you are a redeemer, and that is the story of the gospel that He redeems. And like I said before, it is not my story of struggle and failing, or woundedness, it's His story of redemption and restoration, and "I will make all things new." And that is what He is doing. And realizing it is always intimacy. It always comes back to intimacy. But, I think it is like as a toddler begins to walk I know when you say when you're helping, my next door neighbor has twins and they just started walking.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Aww, those little munchkins.

**Michelle Benzinger:** But when you're holding your hands out and you're like, "Come on, come to me. Oh, you can do it. Take another step." And then you scoot back and they like take another step, and then you scoot back. And I was thinking about it when I was doing that with one of them. Like, "Lord, that's how I am with you." "Come on, come a little farther in your trust in me. All right. You can step forward. All right. You're wobbling, but you're not gonna fall. take another step forward." And that's how He sees us. And that's how He wants us to, we grow in our trust muscles. We grow in our trust muscles that He will not leave, we grow in our trust muscles to the people around us that we can voice our needs and our needs will be met. We grow in our trust muscles that He is rewriting the story and that we are actually going to break the family cycles that have gone before us. And that we can actually say, "It ends with me. It ends with this generation. I will be the generation of blessing and not the generation of curse. It ends here, and not because of my power, but because of His." And really believe it. And really believe it, not just lip service.

**Heather Khym:** It's big stuff.

**Michelle Benzinger:** It is big stuff.

**Heather Khym:** Like hanging in the balance. I think on one hand, does God need us? No, he doesn't. Yet He chooses to cooperate with us and to collaborate with us and partner with us.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I would have totally done it in another way if I was God.

**Heather Khym:** Look at our Lady. Like what if she said no. What if the angel appeared and she was like, "I'm good. No, it's not for me. I just can't do that." Like our yeses mean a lot. And I think even our yeses to ourself and to coming into the fullness of who we are, it matters. It matters to our circle of influence, whoever that might be, your children, or your coworkers, or your community, or your school environment, it matters the yeses that we make. And so I just wanna affirm that, what you just said.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And your healing matters. Your healing matters.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Everything does. It's so true.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And I think I may, I don't know if I've told this story on the podcast or not, but I love it. Beth Moore, the amazing Protestant preacher, she tells a story about her dog that had lost a leg and that they called it Tripod. And it was walking on three legs. And the dog had-

**Heather Khym:** It's very fitting.

**Michelle Benzinger:** It's very fitting. And that dog had puppies. And so when the puppy was starting to walk, it would walk with three legs.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** No way.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Because it was following its mother. And the Lord said to Beth when she was praying about it, "If you don't get full healing, that's how your daughters are gonna walk because they're watching you." And that story she told was so-

**Heather Khym:** It's so convicting.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Oh, it gripped me. Because I think even for those of us, those mothers, but anyone else, there's one thing to heal for me, but I will go for healing for my kids. If I know it affects them, I will do it because that mama bear comes out and you're like, I will go for this because of that. I will not have them walk with a limp because I won't allow, it's not me fixing, it's allowing the Lord's freedom in my life.

**Heather Khym:** It's interesting how we have to, we touched on this in the last episode, we have to get lower, before we get bigger.

**Michelle Benzinger:** And poorer!

**Heather Khym:** In some ways it's like, lots of poverty, lots of spiritual poverty, but the getting little, and going back to those little places can be some of the scariest things. I know for myself, for the longest time, it's still hard, I'm working on it. But when I see old pictures of myself at 13, I'm like, "Oh, put that away."

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Why is that so hard?

**Heather Khym:** I just don't even wanna look at her. And I think there's so many parts of my young self that I've rejected because she was so broken, because of so many things that have happened, but it's embarrassing almost. There's like a shame around it of like... And if I were to look at anybody else- And put my story on someone else, I would say, "That poor little girl, what she's had to go through. No wonder, no wonder this is there and this, and no wonder she's shy and awkward and has bad hair," whatever it might be. I mean, those are places that I'm like, I have to learn to welcome myself, those little parts of myself. And I think as I've had children and seeing them at ages that I was wounded and I've paused at times and gone, "That's how old I was. He's so little, just so little. She didn't know," or whatever it might have been.

**Michelle Benzinger:** You have so much compassion.

**Heather Khym:** Totally. I remember I was in this therapy thing, which I'm like, you guys know, I'm a skeptic around most at first. I just wanna know it's the Lord, I wanna know it's legit. Then I'm in, if it's legit.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Heather usually has this six month testing thing. She's like, "I have to test people for six months."

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** We were on probation for quite some time.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah. With people, it's a three months rule. I taught my kids this too. Anyway, so I remember sitting in this therapy session with this old grandma type therapist, her name is Seraphina. And she's like having me do this thing where there's a chair and she's like, "Picture your young self in the chair." And inside I'm like, "This is so cheesy." And I'm like, "Okay, fine, I'll picture myself." So I'm just like, I'm really just trying to get through this session with her. And it was a one-on-one thing. And she's like, "I want you to picture yourself there," and she's going through this part of my story. And then she says, "Now I want you to talk to yourself

and say this." And she starts leading me through a thing and at one point she said, "And tell her it's not her fault." And I was like, "Okay, so we're in a 'Good Will Hunting' moment." In my mind, I was just so disconnected from what she was doing. And I was like, "You mean out loud?" I said. She's like, "Yeah." And I'm dying a thousand deaths, and I go, "Fine." And I go to say it. And I was like, "It's not your..." And then the catch in my throat. And I was like, "Wait, what?" This is the discovery of my own self. And I was like, I just wept and wept and wept. And I didn't know that that was in there at all. I was like, I didn't know that I thought it was her fault. Like, I didn't know that I was carrying all of this around, I didn't know any of those things about myself. But I think I know myself very well, don't we? Don't we think we know ourselves so well. We're like, "Nobody knows me like me." God knows the parts of us that we've hidden away, that we've rejected, that we've separated ourselves from, that we've abandoned and said, "I am not coming for you." You are on your own-

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** You exile them.

**Heather Khym:** ...girl in there. So anyway, I love this next quote from Henri Nouwen is he says, "A part of you was left behind very early in your life. The part that never felt completely received. It's full of fears. Meanwhile, you grew up with many survival skills, but you want yourself to be one. So you have to bring home the part of you that was left behind. That is not easy because you have become quite a formidable person. And your fearful part does not know if it can safely dwell with you. Your grown up self has to become very childlike, hospitable, gentle, and caring so your anxious self can return and feel safe."

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Henri's so good.

**Heather Khym:** Maybe we should just have Henri doing the podcast.

**Michelle Benzinger:** He's dead Heather, but thank you.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Well, that is the key to everything is, hospitable, gentle and caring. And I think even in, we've all had experiences where we've been facing some pretty deep things about ourselves that are very painful or that we are very embarrassed about, and the presence of somebody else who is hospitable, gentle and caring, and who is coming along, who is sitting next to us, so to speak. And obviously the Lord and other people, like He does give safety of, "You can say whatever you want, I'm not gonna abandon you." Like, "There's nothing too ugly for me. I'm not, I'm not going anywhere." And that covenant, like we've said before, that covenant is what gives us freedom to have everything on the table. It's the covenant of unconditional love. It was just our baptism, but that's the covenant, and

that interior disposition to ourselves, which we all have these exiles that we just, that might be a great exercise for all of us this week to find a picture of yourself in middle school and just spend time with her this week or him. And we're like, "Oh, not that, anything but that." But that tells us a lot about our own. We would never say to somebody who's 13 the things we say to ourselves. We would never do that. It would crush them, but yet somehow we just unload on ourselves. Sometimes we say, "Oh you're so stupid. What's wrong with you? Didn't you know they were picking on you. Like, why didn't you..." Oh my gosh! It's just so, ugh, just shattering to ourselves. And then of course you wanna shatter other people. Our exterior words are just.

**Heather Khym:** Well love your neighbor as yourself, right? It's like, "Well, if I don't love myself, if that's how I speak to myself, like..."

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Exactly, We're critical and judgmental of other people and we think it's all about them, all it is a reflection of our own interior state. Where we're terrified, we won't feel safe so we're trying to put up these, it's just, we're so wonderfully complicated. And we're not at the same time, it's just like, oh my gosh.

**Michelle Benzinger:** But like you and I talked about, we said before, the older I get, the more I don't know. The more I don't know, I don't understand. And not in a naive way, just we are a mystery. We are a mystery and people are a mystery. But that it is a beautiful journey this mystery to dive deeper, not to pull out of the mystery, but to actually lean into the mystery of ourselves and other people, and give a lot of grace and compassion. And I think when you love your neighbor as yourself, are you compassionate with yourself as your neighbors too? It is a both hands. Do you show yourself compassion? Do you show yourself, and also to risk. To love and to be vulnerable is to risk and invite people into these little parts of it is, first of all, it's vulnerable for ourselves to go to these little parts of ourselves, our middle school pictures, like, who allowed me to get that butt cut, like, come on people. But other parts of ourselves to allow other people to walk into our heart. It's a vulnerability, it is a deep vulnerability. I know for me, just even watching the whole restoration process of my heart and just really bringing my husband's fullness into it. We are just on a deep dive together and to just, really, it's more my healing, but.

**Heather Khym:** He's been so good.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I mean, yeah. And Chris is like, "No, we're one. In the Sacrament of marriage, we're one so it's our healing." And just, it makes me cry just really going deep in there, but it's realizing like, oh my gosh, there's this intimacy and it keeps on going deeper and deeper. And there's this fear like, oh my gosh. But if I have a couple of secret rooms in my heart that I can escape to if something, I

still have that contingency plan, I still have the escape route in my heart that I can hide, I still have the little doors that I can hide, the hidden places just in case something happens and I still realize, oh my goodness, and realizing we're at the point where he has complete and full access. And one of the visuals I always pray with is like myself in Mary's womb. You know, that's is a safe, secure place, or whatever. And my husband and I are reading this meditation from John Paul II on givenness. And there's a part about the womb there. And I remember we were sitting on the dock by the water at the bay reading this.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Sitting on the dock of the bay?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Sitting on the dock of the bay.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Were you guys watching the tide?

**Heather Khym:** Wasting time?

**Michelle Benzinger:** Uh uh. Wasting time. Thank you Otis Redding.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Just couldn't resist. I'm sorry.

**Michelle Benzinger:** I think that's awesome. But we were sitting there and it was like this epiphany moment. "Oh, we're one. Chris you're supposed to be in the womb with me." And he's kind of like, "Duh, baby." But for me it was like this epiphany, you're there with me in the womb. And I remember I had a phone call afterwards and I was telling Doctor Bob, and I was like, "I just had the biggest epiphany. Chris was supposed to be in the womb." Bob in his fatherly, "Hm mm." And he's like, "Because you finally feel completely safe, Michelle, to allow him in there where intimacy can be expressed." And I was like, "Wow." But what amazed me is that it was gentle, it was tender, it was like a gentle unfolding. It was a gentle unfolding in my heart. It wasn't this pushing through, it wasn't. It was an unfolding. It's like the knots were unfolded. And that's the kind of God we have, He's inviting us to unfold and learn ourselves again and invite us into the deeper recesses and saying, "Okay, where are we still hiding?" "Girl, you still got some fig leaves."

**Heather Khym:** Yeah. And I think too, to acknowledge where we expect other people to be gentle and kind and safe for us, that we also need to cultivate the gifts and the skills to be that for other people.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Oh, I agree.

**Heather Khym:** When you open your heart to someone and they feel safe and they trust you with the deep places of their heart, you cannot walk away. You can not just abandon them, you need to be a safe, loyal friend. This is what it means, or else don't go there.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah. Absolutely.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** That's twice as worse.

**Heather Khym:** When you create safety for someone, that's sacred ground. Which is something I so appreciate about our friendship is that we've all been able to hold this space for each other, even over miles and distance and all the weird things of life. But that there's sacred space that's held for each other.

**Michelle Benzinger:** Amen.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah. It's a wonderful gift. I wonder if we could talk a bit about kind of some of the, what happens when tasks fail? In our last podcast episode we talked about what are the primary tasks of the child and then the caretakers? And so we were speaking of how as daughters our primary task is learning how to receive. And this is from "The Life Model" from James Friesen and some other Catholic, or Christian psychologist. So they said, "The primary resulting problem when the tasks are not completed by ourselves and by the people in charge of being responsible for us is we have weak or stormy relationships." So these are some things they list when tasks fail and these are the things that we're talking about in the areas of woundedness. So, number one, when tasks fail, when I don't live in joy, I don't know, learn how to live in joy, as in receiving and then having people care for me as a child, number one is "Weak identity, fear and coldness dominate bonds with others." Number two, "Has difficulty bonding, which often leads to manipulative, self-centered isolated or discontented personality." Number three is "Withdrawn, disengaged, self stimulating, and unresponsive." Number four, "Has an inability to regulate emotions." And number five, "Has uncontrollable emotional outbursts, excessive worry and depression, or avoids, escapes, or gets stuck in certain emotions." So I think that's like the broad stroke that describes it. I know I'm reading and I'm like, "Yeah I relate to that." I relate to all the places.

**Heather Khym:** You like highlight the entire section.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah. Definitely. So those places where we experience emotional outbursts or we're cold or withdrawn, or calculating, or we're manipulative, or we don't feel safe. So these are all hallmarks of places that my

heart does not feel safe, the antithesis of what we were just talking about. So we're gonna remove the pathology of it, of like, "Oh, you're a horrible human being," to understand like, "Oh, I'm doing this because I don't feel safe." And there's some breach, there's some gap, there's some place in my story that has yet to receive Christ communion and the love of others. And so here are the fallout from that. I think helping us understand that we can like, "Okay I can acknowledge some pretty difficult behavior, different emotional experiences. Okay Jesus, what's happening?" So what are some things that you guys notice is that list? I know it's a lot, but.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah. There's a lot of things and I think one of the primary responses that we have sometimes is "Well, that's just who I am." When someone challenges us we're like, "Well, that's just who I am, that's my personality," or whatever. "Deal with it, get over it." And that's a lie. That's not who we are. We're made to love like the lover that we were made in the image of. And God freely gives himself. Without reservation, completely, totally, faithfully, fruitfully. And so, we too are called to have that same kind of love dwelling within our hearts, but pouring forth from our hearts too. And so I think if we've surrendered to some of those things, it's time that we take ground back and just say, "I don't want to be this anymore. I don't wanna act like this anymore because this is not who I am." To sort of like take this away from a false identity that we may have found of like "Well, I'm the tough one." Or "I'm the truth speaker so I'm gonna speak it and I might shatter you, but hey, it's the truth." Just, all of those things that we sort of take on as our identity. And really there's a lot of reasons underneath why that is. Our goal is to love and to be in communion with love Himself. Sometimes we just get it wrong, we lose sight, there's always space to begin again, there's always space to go, "Hey, dang." As we're talking you might be might be like, "Dang, this is hard." Maybe you turned it off already, I don't know. Yeah. That's okay. I think to just have the patience with yourself to say, "Whoa, there's a lot of things still that I need to work on, and I can, I can." And "Where can I access resources to help me, people to journey with, counselors to walk with, spiritual directors, whatever it might be, books to read that might help me understand who I am and then know what to ask Jesus for in the area of healing."

**Michelle Benzinger:** And I love this, the one on, I love "The Life Model," but love the, "The personal task is learn how to receive. And the communal task is it gives care that matches the infant's needs without the infant asking. And so when the task fails, it is withdrawn, disengaged, self stimulating, and unresponsive." And for me, that's the one that just stands out to me so much because if you can't receive, then you can't fully receive the gift that you are, and then you can't freely and fully give the gift of yourself to others. So like in John Paul II's language, we are not self possessed completely. We are not self mastered completely. So we can't be self gift completely. So it's almost like giving someone a gift, but it's like half of a gift where you have, say a pair of socks, but here is just one sock.



**Heather Khym:** And then expecting it to be awesome.

**Michelle Benzinger:** It's expecting it to be awesome. And it's like, "Don't you love the pair?"

**Heather Khym:** "Why is my marriage not perfect?"

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah, exactly. But you're not giving freely. It's like learning how to receive the gift that you are so that you can learn how to receive. Because if not, you'll withdraw. And isn't that garden language? Like, we just go back to hiding again because...

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** which makes sense.

**Michelle Benzinger:** It does!

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** 'Cause if it's not safe and it feels like I'm all alone and have to figure it out on my own, well of course I'm gonna be like, "I'm gonna circle the wagons in my own heart."

**Michelle Benzinger:** Yeah. Close up shop, baby. You're not coming in. So yeah. So it's just realizing that it's just that gentle process. But I think there something about coming home to yourself. What does it mean to really come home to yourself, like Henri Nouwen says. What it means to welcome the little parts of yourself? What does it mean to welcome the parts where you realize that you're not even safe with yourself-

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh yes!

**Michelle Benzinger:** Sometimes. And forgiving yourself for that. Sometimes you're like, "I'm not even trustworthy with my own self." Like, "What does that mean?" Like, "I don't even know what's best for me sometimes. I don't even know." And forgiving yourself for that because there was something that you, deep in me, I'm like, "Oh, a need wasn't met so I don't even know how to do this." And being compassionate with myself about that and not shaming yourself. So, yeah.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Well, and I think these are also the places that Saint Paul talks about is that this is a love that surpasses knowledge, this is where the love, to have self-knowledge is important. But what he's talking about is the unconditional of this surpasses just even my intellectual knowledge of God or my understanding of myself, but the love that surpasses all of that, and encompasses that, and it becomes the knowledge of intimacy like we're talking about. And that's

the truth is that we are not the labels we place on ourselves, that other people place on us. We were talking this summer, we were at an event and we were talking about a quote that we have, or that we had heard from somebody, a great pastor of a church. And he said, "I can't afford to have thoughts in my own heart that God does not have about me." "I can't afford to think thoughts about myself that God does not think about me." 'Cause we have so many thoughts in our own heart that God does not, at least the way we see ourselves, even our wounds of how often we want to hide them, or we want to pretend they're not there, or we just put a Band-Aid on them, and that's not how Jesus, so it's like really learning as a disciple, as a student, as a lover of Christ, of how does Christ live? And that's what he's, this just the gospel. That's all. Really.

**Heather Khym:** Yeah. And I just feel like there needs to be a word around just acknowledging how many times God says to not be afraid, I think. Over and over again, He says throughout all of scripture, "Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid." And so I just feel like for some of us, we need to hear that. We need to hear that voice of God saying to our hearts on all of these levels, "Don't be afraid to go there." I know I've needed to hear that. I've needed to hear that from Him.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah. He is with us and he will bring us through. Well friends, well friends. Should we talk about our one thing for the week as we let these things settle in people's hearts, Michelle what's your one thing?

**Michelle Benzinger:** My one thing is the book about "Sacred Rest" by Dr. Dalton-Smith, I think. I'm butchering the name, but it's "Sacred Rest." I'll put the book show, I mean the book link in the show notes. But this woman, and she's a doctor, she's actually a Christian doctor talks about the different types of rest. That there is mental rest, and physical rest, and creative rest, and all the different kinds of rest. So it's been so helpful for me because when people say, "Oh, you need to rest more." It doesn't mean stop doing stuff completely. I'm like, that is actually not restful for me, I want to have a purpose. But she really identifies the seven different types of rests and really assesses what do you need and what brings you life and learning how to do that and realizing that the more secure you are in God's abiding presence, the better you are able to rest. So that is my one thing. Sister what's yours?

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Oh, my one thing is my mom, even though she's from South Texas, she makes a good seafood gumbo. So I just love a good, my mom puts okra in it, she puts scallop, she puts shrimp, and so she makes every time I come home and I was just at home, so I had it. And we invited our parish priest over and it was nice and spicy and it was just great. So I'm just gonna put my mom's seafood gumbo recipe on there.

**Michelle Benzinger:** That's a good Fall recipe, girl.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah it is, come on.

**Heather Khym:** Shout out to Agnes.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Yeah, Mrs H. She butchers her own chicken, but that's a different story, people. I won't traumatize you. We're speaking of wounds so I won't do that.

**Heather Khym:** So I watched this little video, it was like a conversation between three people that we love, we don't know them personally, but Louie Giglio, Jennie Allen, and Craig Groeschel, all had a conversation. They've all written similar books, Louie Giglio, I think the video is called, "Don't Give the Enemy a Seat at Your Table," or something like that. And Craig Groeschel wrote one called "The War In Your Mind." And Jennie Allen wrote one too, I don't know what it's called. But anyway, the three of them were just talking about that concept of the war in our mind, how the enemy comes in and sits down at the table and makes himself comfortable- And starts spitting lies to us. It was just a fascinating conversation 'cause I respect deeply the three of them. And we'll put the link in our show notes and you can check out the video there.

**Sister Miriam James Heidland:** Sounds like good stuff. I will actually, it's very fitting to what we're talking about today. Thank you so much for joining us this week, friends. And maybe it's time to get out of the photo album and find a picture of yourself at a tender age and just spend time with her or him, for our male listeners this week. And just see what Jesus says about that little person, 'cause He loves them and He loves you. So, until next week we'll be abiding together. God bless you. Have a great week.

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